

**John Baylis to George Washington, January 30, 1758,
Letters to Washington and Accompanying Papers.
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FROM JOHN BAYLIS.¹

JOHN BAYLIS 30th. Jany. 1758

SIR

I send you here Inclosed an Advertisement such as contains fewer Lines than the other you saw & answers my purpose equally as well.

I am not naturally Inclined to expose the Foibles of mankind because many of them happen in the course of my own Actions, but in this case I am too sensibly touched to content myself without giving to my Acquaintances a circumstantial acct. of the whole Affair—which must consequently expose those who were concerned in it as well as the Intolerable Insolence & cowardice of Alixand Woodrow, who has no way Left to contradict this Just Asspersion but by shewing the World to the contrary.

Your Observation in Regard to the Officers not being particularized was Just. Which you must Rember I gave up & confessed my error—& told you I would Rectify it But putting yr. self in a passion & openly espousing the causes of the Officers before you knew whether they were Justly or unjustly charged—this I say accompanied with such Menacing Air to a Person whom you are sensible always preserved the greatest Regard for you was a little Imprudent and unjustifiable.

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It's certain some of yr. Officers behaved Ill if the following hints have the least connection with Truth.

I can prove the Soldiers who came to my Lodgings to Mob me said (upon my asking Questions) they had good Backers & that their Officers sent them. Which seem'd true to me—for in conversation with the Officers—after that I never heard a Soldier blamed for it nor no care was taken to punish them for their Insolence—till the Sheriff Complain'd to a Magistrate—who Ordered the Offending Soldiers to Goal for want of Security for future good behaviour.

Indeed Capt. Bullett behaved well—in everything but a Neglect of punishing the soldiers he Dispersed himself after I sent for him. Tho' he appeared Ready upon complaint made as aforesaid to put the Offenders under Military punishment

I can prove sundry ungentleman like Actions—as well as Words—dropped from Some of yr. Officers—which did not escape my Notice & Inteligence

Their abusing Lord Fairfax by setting Woodrow on & speaking disrespectfully of him—as well as Threatg. his person—they must upon mature Deliberation condemn themselves for.

It was observed that one Mr. Cooper went from my Lodgings in the Night & got most Inhumanly Beaten by the soldiers for no other offence but that they thought it was I—so I was credibly Informed. This Sir is far from a circumstantial Acct. Which if delivered minutely would confirm as bad an opinion of the matter as I have.

I have in this narrow Detail confined myself to truth without exaggerating the matter—truly the Motive of these Lines is to gratify yr. Request & keep up that good Harmony that usually subsisted between us—I Hope that a few Hot & ungarded words—from both sides—will not make the least breach in friendship between us.

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Please favour me with a Line by the first opportunity intimating yr. sentiments on the Matter. I am Sir with (the usual) Respect yr. most Obedt.

Hble Servant JOHN BAYLIS

28th Jany. 1758

Whereas Alixander Woodrow under the encouragement & Imediate protection of a party of the Regimental Subaltern Officers—then at Winchester on Wednesday the 25th. of December 1757 at night did challenge the subscriber to Fight a Duel

Therefore (to avoid prolivity) I take this short Method to Inform the World that I waited on the said Alixander Woodrow next Morning with my sword & Pistol's in order to give or take satisfaction conformable to the Punctilio's of Honour But was surprized to find he would not fight & even denyed he had ever challenged me. From this I hope the Judicious part of the World will alow me the Liberty to say without censure—that the said Alixander Woodrow is an Arrant coward—& has no way Left to wipe off the Odium but to Re-assume the Challenge first given—& carry it to a necessary Length to Retrieve his Honour.

1 Major John Baylis, of Prince William County, a member of the House of Assembly, 1768.